

# Katoomba Baptist Church Bulletin

*Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. Psalm 34:4*

41 Waratah Street, Katoomba NSW 2780.

August 2020.

Pastor: Steve Cooper. Contact: mob. 0451 954 675; email cooper.steve.j@gmail.com .

Restricted church services are in compliance with the NSW Government rules.

10am Sunday service is also streamed on Katoomba Baptist Church's YouTube channel.

KBC website <https://katoombabaptist.org.au>

Bible Study: Second and Fourth Wednesday of the month, on Zoom

(to participate, please email Grahame McCraw: [mowogmaca@gmail.com](mailto:mowogmaca@gmail.com)).

Prayer meeting: Each Saturday, 9am. Prayer for Israel: Third Friday of the month, 1.30pm.

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## From the Pastor

It's a real delight for me to write to you as your 'Pastor'! It's been a few years since KBC has had a Pastor, and I know you've been praying to the Lord to send the right person. For me, earlier this year the Lord put it on my heart to apply for this position. God has shown both me and our church that this is his arrangement. It's nice for Joy and me to think now of KBC as 'our church', and feel part of this church family. Thank you for your warm welcome!

For this first 'From the Pastor', let me describe the way I see my pastoral role. I see a Pastor as a companion. I want to come alongside each of you, and the church as a whole, and walk the journey with you. My first priority is to attend to my own personal relationship with the Lord, meditating on Scripture, faithful in prayer, and in communion with God. Then as I come alongside as a companion and friend, I am ready to accompany you as you walk with the Lord. I can get to know you, listen to your story, pray for you, discern together what God might be saying and doing in your situation, and encourage you to respond to God. I enjoy visiting people in their home, or chatting in a coffee shop – let me know when you're available!

The verse I selected to preach on for my induction service is a suitable motto for my pastoral ministry and our church: 'Oh magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together!' (Ps 34:3) This verse gives a vision for the future. Our hope and prayer is that every week, each of us will grow in our understanding of God. May our minds and hearts grasp a greater and clearer view of what God is like, the God who reveals himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. May our Sunday worship services, our relationships with one another, and our everyday lives magnify and exalt our great God. And let's do this together!

At the heart of the Christian life is prayer, our daily conversation with God. An important part of my role as Pastor is to help us all to pray. Therefore, my preaching during the coming months will address various aspects of prayer. In August-September we'll look at *Praying the Lord's Prayer* (Matt 6:9-13). Then in October-November we'll reflect on the Book of Habakkuk, learning from the prophet's dialogue with God in prayer. I'll be preaching every second Sunday, while others preach on the other Sundays. When I'm not preaching, I will lead the service, and while I'm leading we will explore various aspects of prayer.

We are beginning a new era for Katoomba Baptist Church. We don't know what the Lord has in store or what the future holds. But we do know that God is in control, and he has a good plan for us and the Upper Mountains. I invite you to 'magnify the Lord with me, and exalt his name together!' (Ps 34:3)

Yours with a heart grateful to God,  
Pastor Steve Cooper.

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## Please pray

- with thanks and praise that the Lord has called Steve Cooper to be our Pastor.
- for the Lord to guide us through these times in which we live, and grant us strength and wisdom.
- for our leaders and authorities, for medical staff and indeed all those who are dealing with this crisis.
- that the Lord will minister to all who are undergoing trials and suffering, here and everywhere.
- for Israel, for the "Peace of Jerusalem" (Ps 122:6) and for the Gospel there "To the Jew first." (Rom 1:16).
- for our persecuted brothers and sisters in nations rich and poor and for those who persecute them.
- for the people whose livelihoods have been impacted by the Coronavirus, the drought and fires.
- for revival in our community, state, nation, and throughout the world, and for our faith to increase.
- that the Lord will help us to use our gifts for His glory and to share the Gospel with others.
- that the Lord will draw our unsaved loved ones and all for whom we have a burden.
- for missions to be fruitful, especially those we support as a church, and for the preservation of converts.
- that we continue to grow in Christian love as a church, serving the Lord and each other.
- Maranatha! ("Come, O Lord!")

**"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks:  
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).**

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## Church announcements

- KBC Sunday service is available online. Google "Katoomba Baptist Church YouTube".
  - KBC now has a website! (Thanks Daniel and Josh!). Visit <https://katoombabaptist.org.au>
  - Please register on the website if you wish to continue to receive the KBC Bulletin by email.
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**“God is not discoverable or demonstrable by purely scientific means, unfortunately for the scientifically minded. But that really proves nothing. It simply means that the wrong instruments are being used for the job.” [John Bertram Phillips]**

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**From FEBC website [<https://febc.org.au/seven-generations>]**

***Seven Generations shaped by FEBC Gospel Broadcasts***

*“It all started with my great, great, great grandmother, who first tuned into FEBC’s Liangyou Radio in China more than 50 years ago. Later, after being called by God to become a pastor, my great grandfather established the Christian faith in our family. I’m the sixth generation of Christians; my children are the seventh.*

*Our journey to faith was not without difficulties. At a low point forty years ago, when living conditions in China were not good, it was impossible to gather in church. When our family’s spiritual life was very fragile, God introduced us to FEBC. It was like discovering a priceless treasure! We immediately began listening regularly. Liangyou Radio sowed a lot of seeds in our family. Now, my seven children and their families are also Christians.*

*We all serve God. If it were not for the broadcasters at FEBC who helped us keep our eyes on Jesus, this would not be possible.*

*Liangyou Radio has been a wonderful companion as long as I can remember. As a child, I loved listening to their programs until I fell asleep. My grandmother would also listen and shared much of what she learned with others. When I returned to China for a visit, I stayed with her for a few nights. In the evening, I laid in bed with her while she turned on Liangyou Radio. I was grateful I could still hear those familiar voices and programs, which evoked many beautiful childhood memories.*

*Liangyou Radio is part of our family’s life to this day. It is such an honour to convey our gratitude on this special anniversary and to testify for the Lord. I want to share this with you all at FEBC: The field God gave you is a lot bigger than you think. The wheat you harvested through the years, is far more than you will ever know. Please continue serving God and ask Him for additional anointing to bless even more people. Thank you FEBC!”*

*It is almost incomprehensible, a small dream 75 years ago would eventually reach half the world’s population with the Gospel. The impossible only became possible because God was in the centre. FEBC is, after all, God’s ministry, we are here to serve and we’re grateful you have chosen to partner along-side us. **We will continue to Let Them Hear.***

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**August birthdays:** Grahame M 4th, Margaret N 5th, Simeon W 9th, Peter B 10th, Tony S 17th, Merryanne M 21st, Paul T 26th, Judith H 29th, Anne H 30th.

May the Lord bless you abundantly on your special day and through the year ahead in your walk with Him.

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**Spurgeon on preaching the Gospel**

*... There is a way of preaching something that looks like the Gospel, and with which almost everybody will be quite satisfied and well pleased. There is a way of doing this, but let the man who is tempted to do it beware of the judgment of the last tremendous day. There is a way of saying, ‘Well, I shall soften down the doctrine of eternal punishment; I will be quiet as to that very doctrine of election, and as to substitution, since it is very objectionable to the carnal mind, very little shall be said about it; if there is anything in our Church discipline which is obnoxious to people, we will soften it down, and make the way as smooth as possible; we will roll every stone into the road, and have a big roller to crush them all; we will take every stumbling block out of the way, and in this way we will hope to build up a Church.’ Yes, that is a very likely thing, but let a man take heed how he buildeth thereon, for every man’s work must be tried as by fire, and if he has built of wood, hay, and stubble, he may make a very pretty building of it, but the fire shall try every man’s work of whatever sort it is. But where the Gospel is unhesitatingly preached, and where it is attended in the Church by really earnest and holy living, it becomes a great winnowing-fan.*

[Charles Spurgeon, from the prayer meeting address, “The Winnowing Fan”.]

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**Friday July 21st — Prayer for Israel at Katoomba Baptist Church, 1.30pm**

**“For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim. Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days.” [Hosea 3:4-5]**

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**Contributions welcome:** Our church bulletin is available on the first Sunday service of the month as a two-page print version. A longer, multi-page PDF version of the Bulletin is uploaded to the church website each month and may be sent to you by email upon registration: <https://katoombabaptist.org.au/library/bulletins/>. Contributions and enquiries can be made to the editor, Bill Fewer (email: [hillbillyfewer@gmail.com](mailto:hillbillyfewer@gmail.com)).

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**Giving:** Please remember that you can give online to Katoomba Baptist Church at BSB 704-922 and Account Number 100008926. Thank you for your faithful commitment to giving.

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**So Jesus said to them, “When you pray, say:**

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”**

**[Luke 11:2-4]**

## Katoomba Baptist Church Bulletin Online Extra

*\* Please note that to access websites referred to in the Bulletin, please copy and paste the link into the address bar of your web browser.\**

### **A reminder that KBC now has a website**

**<https://katoombabaptist.org.au>**

A big thank you to the Thomas brothers, Daniel and Joshua, who have spent many, many hours developing the church's website. It is very professionally done, with a clearly set out statement of our beliefs, and with a mass of well-chosen resources, sermons, Bulletins, and so on. It is also very easy to find your way around, even for the most timid of internet users.

A reminder too that if you want to continue to receive the church Bulletin by email then you need to register on the KBC website: <https://katoombabaptist.org.au/library/bulletins/>

Let's pray that with this new online presence that the Lord will draw people to Him through our church. In all our ministries, individually and as a fellowship, may the Lord be blessed and glory be to Him.

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### **Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT website**

In response to the Covid-19 crisis, the Baptist Union has put together a very helpful page on their website which is an excellent guide for local churches and their fellowships:

<https://nswactbaptists.org.au/covid19/>

Plus, there is a national call to daily prayer at 7pm to seek the Lord about the crisis:

<https://www.baptist.org.au/covid-19-national-call-to-prayer/>

And there is also the previous disaster which is still affecting many people:

Bushfire Relief and Recovery Campaign

<https://nswactbaptists.org.au/bushfire-relief-and-recovery/>

And, finally, you can contact the Baptist Union website and request to be added to the prayer mailing list.

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### **From J.I. Packer, "Knowing God"**

#### ***Meditating on the Truth***

*... How can we turn our knowledge about God into knowledge of God? The rule for doing this is demanding, but simple. It is that we turn each truth that we learn about God into matter for meditation before God, leading to prayer and praise to God.*

*We have some idea, perhaps, what prayer is, but what is meditation? Well may we ask; for meditation is a lost art today, and Christian people suffer grievously from their ignorance of the practice. Meditation is the activity of calling to mind, and thinking over, and dwelling on, and applying to oneself, the various things that one knows about the works and ways and purposes and promises of God. It is an activity of holy thought, consciously performed in the presence of God, under the eye of God, by the help of God, as a means of communion with God. Its purpose is to clear one's mental and spiritual vision of God, and to let his truth make its full and proper impact on one's mind and heart. It is a matter of talking to oneself about God and oneself; it is, indeed, often a matter of arguing with oneself, reasoning oneself out of moods of doubt and unbelief into a clear apprehension of God's power and grace.*

*Its effect is ever to humble us, as we contemplate God's greatness and glory, and our own littleness and sinfulness, and to encourage and reassure us — 'comfort' us, in the old, strong Bible sense of the word — as we contemplate the unsearchable riches of divine mercy displayed in the Lord Jesus Christ. ... And it is as we enter more and more deeply into this experience of being humbled and exalted that our knowledge of God increases, and with it our peace, our strength, and our joy. God help us, then, to put our knowledge about God to this use, that we all may in truth 'know the Lord'.*

**[Packer, J.I. *Knowing God*, London, Hodder & Stoughton, pp. 22-3]**

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## **J.I. Packer delivers a message on “Personal Holiness**

### **From TS4M YouTube channel:**

*One of the 'founding fathers' of Trinity School for Ministry; renowned author, speaker, and Theological teacher — the Reverend Dr. J.I. Packer — speaks on Personal Holiness from the heart and head of one of Western Christendom's most beloved and providentially influential, Evangelical voices in the 20th & 21st centuries. It was the school's honor to host this event in Common's Hall on the eve of January 16th, 2014.*

### **Watch the video at:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDnk-jSz7Z4>

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## **“What Do You Rely Upon?”**

**by Costa Karagounas**

Having received Bill's reminder that the latest Bulletin is pending, there was sudden pressure to write. Eleven times in the Book of Revelation, the apostle John is admonished: 'Write this down!..' John was in a stupor. He was in wonderment about the things he was seeing and hearing. The angel was 'whipping' him along. Deadlines and pressure are sometimes an advantage.

Have you wondered that innumerable Godly writings were penned regarding Scripture? There are still things being written, and many more will come. Are there vast libraries written about any other subject?

There are over 300 titles and names referring to Jesus in Scripture. No other man in history has even come close to that number. No king nor emperor, no sage nor anyone.

The letters of Paul to the various churches are the oldest surviving letters in history. Let's please not forget the letters Jesus wrote.

Are there extant letters, as in mail delivery, from kings and queens, let alone laypeople of 2000 years ago? I'm not sure; I very much doubt it. It depends which historian you ask, but we have several in our Bible.

The Bible is a unique historical account. All other written history purports to describe people and events from a certain time to a different certain time. The Bible tells us about the time before history, before man even penned history. It also tells us about the time which is to come.

There is not one example of an archaeological find which contradicts the Biblical account. There are thousands of such archaeological finds.

Bible inerrancy is presently under great attack from the enemy. He's used all sorts of secular scholars throughout the times to undermine Bible authenticity and veracity. He's now more than ever using professing Christians to do his bidding.

After Darwin's theory was widely published many Christian voices from the pulpit were frightened and cowered under the lectern. What!? Gorillas and chimps, the scientists shouted, are our cousins. Higher criticism followed, and in its wake, further callow (but learned) retreats from the truth of the Word. How many professing Godly men then secretly doubted in their prayer closets, secretly began to lose their faith precisely because they put their faith in the opinions of men. John 'the Elder' is said to have penned the Book of Revelation, because higher criticism found a different writing style in that text compared to the other John writings. But if you were in a swoon, in great dread and feeling as though dead, with an angel urging you to write, and your shorthand wasn't the best, wouldn't you too expect your writing style to differ somewhat? The original Greek sentences penned by John are in places incomplete! Perhaps he was in a hurry to get to his higher criticism lectures.

I can't go into the detail of cellular biology but it's suffice to mention that even Darwin conceded the principle of irreducible complexity. That principle states that if a structure (say a simple bacterial cell) is so complex, and so made up of multiple parts that the whole cannot possibly function unless all the parts are simultaneously present and operating, then the theory of evolution is shot through. Darwin acknowledged this. Of course he lived in an epoch of rudimentary microscopes incapable of peering into the cellular universe we have the privilege to peer into. A simple bacterium cell contains hundreds of thousands of components, all must function simultaneously otherwise that cell dies. The mathematical probability of those components 'evolving' simultaneously is precisely zero.

If we say to unbelievers, whom we are admonished to honour, 'we rely on the Bible, what do you rely upon?', then the short silence which follows while they think, is deafening.

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## **A Prayer request from Adrian for Uganda**

My Ugandan brother Matovu has told me the Ugandan people are struggling more than ever to get food because of their lockdown. As you know, Idi Amin drove the Ugandan economy into the ground and the country has struggled ever since. As with other African countries, I fear Uganda is on the verge of famine, brought on by Covid-19, amongst other virus outbreaks, political corruption and militia warfare there. Please everyone keep this in your prayers.

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## “Shelter”

a poem by Jemima Woolley

Wind wailing, rain falling,  
Miserable and grey outside.  
Pillows soft, blankets cozy,  
Tea and toast: desired prize.

Sound fortress, strong refuge,  
Walls and roof withstand unchanged.  
Watching wild weather weeping,  
Safely stowed in bed, unfazed.

All the world may storm around me,  
Yet the walls still stand here, sure.  
I trust in them, not always Jesus.  
Help me rest in you, my Lord.

**Soli Deo Gloria.**

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## “World Gone Crazy”

by Michael Woolley

*\* Please note that to access websites please copy and paste the link into the address bar of your web browser.\**

Christians should not be afraid of being contentious - or controversial – Jesus certainly wasn't:

<https://www.frcblog.com/2020/07/christians-must-not-be-afraid-being-controversial/>

Being banned from churches hasn't stopped the salvation of souls that has exploded onto Californian beaches:

<https://www.christianheadlines.com/contributors/milton-quintanilla/california-beach-revival-draws-hundreds-to-christ-likened-to-jesus-people-movement.html>

...this is certainly the norm – and costly - to believers living in places without the moral legacy of our forebears:

Even with this legacy, Powerful Forces have undermined our Educational systems,

[https://twitter.com/Pismo\\_B/status/1287157771993878528](https://twitter.com/Pismo_B/status/1287157771993878528)

our Media,

<https://www.zerohedge.com/political/10-big-fat-lies-youre-being-told-about-portland-riots>

especially the children in the west

<https://www.zerohedge.com/political/inner-city-chaos-armed-gang-children-car-jack-over-dozen-vehicles-chicago>

and what was our Cultural norms,

<https://www.campusreform.org/?ID=15249>

causing the fracturing of society that has now reached full-bloom in the USA:

<https://twitter.com/MrAndyNgo/>

Having now pushed their views “Too Far”, the Cultural Centrists /conservatives have seen through the Tissue of Lies

[https://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2020/07/how\\_white\\_educated\\_female\\_liberals\\_are\\_destroying\\_the\\_culture.html](https://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2020/07/how_white_educated_female_liberals_are_destroying_the_culture.html)

<https://www.zerohedge.com/political/get-woke-go-broke-strikes-ae-after-canceling-live-pd-show>

...and are rejecting the False Narrative of Peaceful Protests – and are supporting those excoriated by the Cancel Culture.

<https://www.zerohedge.com/political/lefts-boycott-goya-has-backfired-spectacularly-conservative-customers-clean-out-store>

Do the above (and other signs : <https://www.zerohedge.com/economics/bridge-nowhere-good> ) announce the turning-point of the golden-age of Globalism? Certainly the rise of China would warn as much:

<https://www.zerohedge.com/geopolitical/international-risk-assessment-has-just-deemed-us-china-military-conflict-highly-likely> Via the FBI & DoJ : Over the past 18 months, the DoJ has arrested several Chinese researchers and charged them with stealing trade secrets or research – from 25 US cities:

<https://www.zerohedge.com/geopolitical/fbi-warns-secret-pla-members-are-doing-scientific-research-25-us-cities> , as well as Biolabs throughout the US: <https://www.zerohedge.com/markets/has-chinas-military-deeply-infiltrated-us-medical-research> - this week the FBI said the Chinese government is acting like "an organized criminal syndicate": <https://www.zerohedge.com/geopolitical/state-dept-china-stole-least-1-billion-trade-secrets-research-us>

and before using Chinese video-sharing app TikTok (or Huawei equipment), one might want to read this article: <https://www.zerohedge.com/technology/protonmail-slams-tiktok-chinese-trojan-horse> .

You may want to recall how our brethren in China are suffering under this regime <https://soundcloud.com/family-research-council/bob-fu-3> – and how their Social Credit Score System mimics the Beast surveillance, in Revelation.

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## Let's praise the God of all creation for His wonderful works!



**Thank you, Trish, for this photo of the 'Snow Drops' in your garden.**

What a beautiful example of God's handiwork are these little flowers.

I would like to include in each edition of the KBC Bulletin a photo that highlights some feature of God's wonderful creation.

So please send me a photo that you've taken, something that you've seen that has inspired you to worship the Lord as the Creator.

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## From Phil Yancey's "Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?"

### Jesus at Prayer

*... The Gospels record just over a dozen specific prayers by Jesus, along with several parables and teachings on the subject. He followed the normal Jewish practice of visiting the synagogue, the 'house of prayer', and of praying at least three times a day. We can safely assume that Jesus also prayed in private, for when his disciples asked for instruction on prayer Jesus said they should seclude themselves. Such prayers in solitude made an impression on his followers: five times the Gospels mention Jesus' practice of praying alone.*

*Like most of us, Jesus turned to prayer in times of trouble. No doubt he prayed intensely as he fasted and meditated on the Bible during his time of wilderness tempting. He prayed aloud as the rendezvous with death approached, the words expressing his inner turmoil: 'Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? "Father, save me from this hour"? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.' His prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane pushed him to the edge of endurance, and three times he fell to the ground, overcome. Jesus' prayers held back nothing.*

*Two of the prayers in troubled times (the Abba in Gethsemane and Eloi from the cross) were so moving that words from the original Semitic language stuck in the minds of hearers. Of the seven cries from the cross, at least three were prayers. Hebrews reports that 'he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death' — but of course he was not saved from death. Like the people who wrote me letters, like all of us at times, Jesus knew the sensation of getting no answer to his pleas.*

*The other typical form of request, prayer for trivial things, apparently had little place in Jesus' practice. Common, everyday things, yes: the Lord's Prayer mentions daily bread, temptations and broken relationships, but these requests are hardly trivial. Jesus' prayers, in fact, show a remarkable lack of concern about his own needs. 'Take this cup from me' may represent the only time Jesus asked something for himself.*

*If he made few requests on his own behalf, Jesus often lifted up prayers for others. He prayed for children brought to him by their mothers, and for 'the people standing here' at Lazarus's grave side, and for Simon Peter who faced a time of testing. In his final intercessory prayer, one last gasp of grace, he asked on behalf of his persecutors, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.'*

When alone, Jesus relied on prayer as a kind of spiritual recharging. After an exhausting day of ministry — recruiting disciples, preaching to crowds, healing the sick — he would withdraw to an isolated place to pray. The tempter had used the lure of popularity and acclaim to test him in the wilderness, and perhaps Jesus needed to escape the clamour in order to firm up his resistance and renew his sense of mission. 'I have food to eat that you know nothing about,' he reassured his disciples, who worried over his lack of nourishment at such times.

Jesus' prayers intensified around key events — his baptism, an all-night session before choosing his twelve disciples, on the Mount of Transfiguration — and especially as he prepared for his departure. Once, he burst into an exuberant prayer when a large group of his followers on a short-term mission returned with tales of spiritual triumph. He prayed for his disciples that the Holy Spirit would come as a 'Counsellor to be with you forever'. In one long, magnificent prayer recorded in John 17, he prayed not only for the immediate disciples but for all of us throughout history who would believe in him because of their message.

### **Does Prayer Matter?**

After surveying Jesus' practice of prayer, I realise that his example does answer one important question about prayer: Does it matter? When doubts creep in and I wonder whether prayer is a sanctified form of talking to myself, I remind myself that the Son of God, who had spoken worlds into being and sustains all that exists, felt a compelling need to pray. He prayed as if it made a difference, as if the time he devoted to prayer mattered every bit as much as the time he devoted to caring for people.

A physician friend of mine who learned I was investigating prayer told me I would have to start with three rather large assumptions: (1) God exists; (2) God is capable of hearing our prayers; and (3) God cares about our prayers. 'None of these three can be proved or disproved,' he said. 'They must either be believed or disbelieved.' He is right, of course, although for me the example of Jesus offers strong evidence in favour of that belief. To discount prayer, to conclude that it does not matter, means to view Jesus as deluded.

In keeping with his race, Jesus truly believed that prayer could change things. Romans of the time prayed to their gods as one would finger a good luck charm, not really expecting much. The sceptical Greeks derided prayer, their playwrights weaving foolish, ridiculous and even obscene prayers into their plays to provoke the audience to uproarious laughter. Only the stubborn Jews, despite their tragic history of unanswered prayers, contended that a supreme and loving God ruled the earth, listened to their prayers and would someday respond.

Jesus claimed to be part of that response, the fulfilment of the Jewish longing for Messiah. 'Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father,' he once said, and went about exhibiting the will of the Father: by feeding the hungry, healing the sick and liberating the captives. When I get letters from people with intractable problems, I tell them I cannot answer the 'Why?' questions. I can, though, answer another question, and that is how God feels about their plight. We know how God feels, because Jesus gave us a face, one sometimes streaked with tears. We can follow Jesus through the Gospels and see how he responds to a widow who has lost her son, to an outcast woman whose bleeding won't stop, even to a Roman officer whose servant has fallen ill. In his tender mercy, Jesus gave us a visible sign of how the Father must hear our prayers even now.

'Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,' Jesus taught us to pray, and he of all people knew the contrast between the two places. On earth Jesus daily confronted tokens of opposition to that will. Mothers thrust sick babies toward him, beggars called out, widows grieved, demons mocked him, enemies stalked him. In such an alien environment, he turned to prayer both as a refuge from mewling crowds and as a reminder of his true home, a place that had no room for evil, pain and death.

Jesus clung to prayer as to a lifeline, for it gave him both the guidance and the energy to know and do the Father's will. To maintain belief in the 'real' world from which he came, to nourish memory of eternal light, he had to work at it all night on occasion, or rise before daybreak. Even then he sometimes grew exasperated with his earthly surroundings ('O unbelieving generation, how long shall I stay with you?'), sometimes fought temptation ('Do not put the Lord your God to the test'), and sometimes doubted ('My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?').

Sceptics raise questions about prayer's usefulness. If God knows best, what's the point? As one pastor asked me, 'Should I just stop bothering him with my petty requests for myself and others, and let God get on with the business of running the universe while I do my best to take care of things down here?' To such questions, I have no better answer than the example of Jesus, who knew above any of us the wisdom of the Father and yet who felt a strong need to flood the heavens with requests.

Although Jesus offered no metaphysical proofs of the effectiveness of prayer, the very fact that he did it establishes its worth. 'Ask and you will receive,' he said frankly, a rebuke to anyone who considers petition a primitive form of prayer. When his disciples failed to heal an afflicted boy, Jesus had a simple explanation: lack of prayer.

[Yancey, Philip. *Prayer: Does it make any difference?*, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 2006, pp. 68-71]

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### **Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones interviewed**

From MLJ Trust YouTube channel

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones is interviewed by Joan Bakewell in December 1970

Watch the video at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-vbydx95tVQ>

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## **“Cyrus the Great in Biblical Prophecy” [from Christian Courier website]**

**by Wayne Jackson**

*One of the truly astounding prophecies of the Bible is found in the last verse of Isaiah 44, together with 45:1ff, (an unfortunate chapter break). It has to do with Cyrus, king of Persia. According to the historian Herodotus (The Histories i.46), Cyrus was the son of Cambyses I. He came to the Persian throne in 559 B.C. Nine years later he conquered the Medes, thus unifying the kingdoms of the Medes and the Persians.*

*Cyrus is mentioned some twenty-three times in the literature of the Old Testament. Isaiah refers to Cyrus as Jehovah’s “shepherd,” the Lord’s “anointed,” who was providentially appointed to facilitate the divine plan. God would lead this monarch to “subdue nations” and “open doors” (an allusion to the Jews’ release from Babylonian captivity). He would make “rough places smooth,” i.e., accommodate the Hebrews’ return to their Palestinian homeland. He would ultimately be responsible for the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the reconstruction of the temple.*

*Amazingly, the king would accomplish these noble tasks even though he did not “know” Jehovah (45:4, 5). In other words, though he was a pagan in sentiment and practice, yet, as an unconscious tool in the hands of the Lord, he would contribute mightily to the Jewish cause, and so, indirectly, to the coming of God’s greater Anointed, Jesus of Nazareth.*

*The fulfilment of these plain and specific predictions is set forth in 2 Chronicles 36:22, 23 and Ezra 1:1-4, 7, 8; 3:7; 4:3. The Encyclopaedia Britannica, an unlikely source, acknowledges that “in 538 [B.C.] Cyrus granted to the Jews, whom Nebuchadnezzar had transported to Babylonia, the return to Palestine and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and its temple” (1958, 940).*

*H. G. Wells, in his book, The Outline of History, concedes that the Jews “returned to their city, Jerusalem” and “rebuilt their temple there under the auspices of Cyrus,” the Persian monarch (1931, p. 253).*

*What many people do not realize in reading Isaiah 44:28ff is that this heathen ruler was named by the prophet long before the monarch was even born. Isaiah prophesied in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (1:1). His ministry thus occurred in the latter portion of the eighth century B.C. (ca. 740 – 701 B.C.). This was some one hundred fifty years before Cyrus came to the throne!*

*Incredible declarations of this nature have led critics (who reject the possibility of predictive prophecy) to suggest that these portions of the book of Isaiah were added much later—after the fact, as it were. A popular reference work states:*

*Because the book of Isaiah includes prophecies concerning events during and after the Exile, critical scholars generally attribute portions of the book to one, two, or more prophets in addition to Isaiah (esp. Deutero-Isaiah, chs. 40-55; Trito-Isaiah, chs. 56-66) (*The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* 1987, 531).*

*Here is an example of how the liberal viewpoint is reflected even by a professor in a Christian university. In discussing the promises set forth in Isaiah 44:26-28, John T. Willis of Abilene Christian University says:*

*All of these promises assume that Jerusalem and the cities of Judah have been razed, that the temple is no longer standing, that Cyrus is on the scene and swiftly growing in power, and that the return of the exiles is imminent (1984 380).*

*If such is the case, then this material could not possibly have been written by the prophet Isaiah since he died long before these events transpired. The author, in spite of his claim of a conservative approach to the book (31), clearly reflects his opinion that this portion of the book of Isaiah was authored by a writer of the sixth century B.C. (cf. 381).*

*Against such a viewpoint we have the assurance of Scripture itself. Earlier, in 41:25ff, Isaiah had spoken of the coming of “one . . . from the rising of the sun.” Though not called by name, the allusion is clearly to Cyrus, who would bring good tidings regarding Jerusalem.*

*In 41:26, Isaiah makes it plain that the mission of Cyrus was a matter of prophecy, not educated speculation. It is a reflection of compromised faith to postulate a late date for these prophecies.*

*Finally, as an interesting sidelight, we note that Josephus, the Jewish historian, stated that the Jews in Babylonian captivity showed Cyrus the prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures which contain his name and described his role in the scheme of God. The historian says that it was this circumstance that motivated the ruler “to fulfil what was written” (Antiquities of the Jews 11.1.2), and thus to issue his edict permitting Israel’s return to her homeland.*

Excavations at Babylon (1879 – 1882) led to the discovery of a clay barrel, known as the Cyrus Cylinder, which contained a marvellous historical confirmation of the biblical narrative. It portrays the benevolent policies of Cyrus in the following fashion: "All of their peoples I gathered together and restored to their dwelling-places" (see Price 1902, 234).

Predictive prophecy is a compelling evidence for the divine origin of the Holy Scriptures.

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*Scripture References:*

Isaiah 44; 1 Chronicles 29:22, 23; Ezra 1:1-4, 7, 8, 3:7, 4:3; Isaiah 44:28; Isaiah 44:26-28

**[Jackson, Wayne. "Cyrus the Great in Biblical Prophecy." *ChristianCourier.com*. Access date: July 24, 2020. <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/264-cyrus-the-great-in-biblical-prophecy>]**

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**From The Persecution of Christians website**

***News: Congo: April 13, 2020***

*Persecution of Christians in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Christians are nearly 94% of the population, but as in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa, Islamic jihadis are increasingly aggressive. This priest and other Christians like him are being called upon to have the courage and perseverance of the Holy Martyrs.*

*There is in Congo a small indigenous Orthodox Church under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Alexandria. Please pray fervently for an end to this cruelty and bloodlust, and ask our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to enable the Orthodox Church in Congo to enjoy peace and security, and to flourish, bringing the light of Christ to this troubled region.*

*For more ChristianPersecution.com coverage of the persecution of Christians in the Democratic Republic of Congo, see <https://christianpersecution.com/category/congo>.*

*"Only God Knows: DRC Priest Martyred for Christ," [International Christian Concern](#), April 9, 2020:*

**04/09/2020 Washington D.C.** *(International Christian Concern) – Two months ago, an Anglican priest was killed in Eringeti village by members of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), an Islamic rebel group that targets Christians in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. The Rev. Ven. Batsemire Ngulongo Yesse was killed alongside 35 other Christians living in four villages in the West district of Beni. The father of eight was slain when he refused to convert to Islam. International Christian Concern (ICC) met with his family at the border in Bwera district, Uganda.*

*"We were in our house at the church on January 29, when we heard people walking inside the compound. My husband opened the door and we found that they were a group of men, armed with machetes. They ordered my husband to sit down. We went inside and hid under the bed, but we could hear what they were saying to him. The people introduced themselves as Muslims. They asked the Reverend why he was still pastoring the church and what religion he belonged to. He said we were Anglicans. They told him to convert to Islam if he wanted to live. He declined. Right there, they slew his neck and left. He died on the spot," said Kapitula Francoise Mbambu, the widow of Rev. Ven. Batsemire Ngulongo Yesse.*

*His son, Paluku Ngalyananzighu, narrated the horrific incident that took the life of his father...."Now this time, they came at night and knocked at the door. My father opened the door. They asked him why he had defiled their order of leaving Christianity and becoming a Muslim. He replied that he was raised in a Christian family, became a Christian and baptized in an Anglican church and he cannot convert to another religion. The Islamists threatened to kill him. He said that it is only God who knows the time of his death and if it is time for him to die then he is ready to die a Christian. Then they slaughtered him. I was in another house and I heard all that they were doing. When they had killed my father they left."*

*The church in Congo has been experiencing continued attacks on Christians for over a decade. Many have been killed and cars and vehicles belonging to believers burnt. In November 2019 the ADF group killed the pastor of a Baptist church in Mayimoya. The Christians there have been living in fear since then. In other instances, the attackers would meet people on the way and separate Christians from Muslims and kill them.*

Reverend Wilson Kasereka, the Busongora Archdeacon in the Diocese of North Kivu, who accompanied the family of the slain priest, said, "The war against Christians has been escalating and people are dying daily in the territories of Beni, Mbau, Eringeti, Mayi-moya, Kokola and other towns. We have lost several pastors that have been serving Christians in Congo and we live in fear because we do not know when the ADF will come for us. We have many refugees here at the border of Congo and Uganda because there is some peace. We have many Christians who have taken shelter in our diocese. The Anglican of Congo is not strong enough to support all these Christians. These Christian refugees need a lot of prayers and support."

The ADF is an Islamic rebel group that originated in Uganda in the 1980s and settled in the Rwenzori Mountains that sit along the border of Uganda and Congo. They have been killing, raping, and kidnapping Christians for more than two decades....

[*The Persecution of Christians*, <https://christianpersecution.com/congo/congo-they-told-him-to-convert-to-islam-if-he-wanted-to-live-he-declined-they-slew-his-neck-and-left>. Accessed 26/7/20.]

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## From MAF UK YouTube channel

### **"Being shot won't stop missionary Maud serving God in Congo"**

One year after being shot at her home by robbers, MAF helped return SIM missionary Maud Kells to service in Mulita, Democratic Republic of Congo. Where she received a huge welcome by the community! MAF pilots helped save the Northern Irish missionary's life through an emergency medevac flight, and we're so pleased our friend has recovered.

Watch the video at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5Jlmo1q5Jk>

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## ***Ezra Reads and Explains the Law [Nehemiah 8:1-12]***

Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded Israel. So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month. Then he read from it in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.

So Ezra the scribe stood on a platform of wood which they had made for the purpose; and beside him, at his right hand, stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaijah, Urijah, Hilkiyah, and Maaseiah; and at his left hand Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God.

Then all the people answered, "Amen, Amen!" while lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law; and the people stood in their place. So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.

And Nehemiah, who was the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn nor weep." For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law.

Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

So the Levites quieted all the people, saying, "Be still, for the day is holy; do not be grieved." And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to send portions and rejoice greatly, because they understood the words that were declared to them.

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